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Although the Gros Ventres are mentioned with sufficient frequency in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century sources to enable us to trace some of their movements and history, information on their culture is disappointingly meager. There is nothing in the sources on the Gros Ventres, for instance, that is in any way comparable with the richness of Thompson's account of the Piegan. The only real knowledge we have had of Gros Ventre culture is from the pioneer ethnological investigations of Professor Kroeber. In his Ethnology of the Gros Ventre, published in 1908, Dr. Kroeber deals with material culture and outlines the political, social and religious organization. He gives excellent illustrations of such objects pertaining to industries, to recreative, and to ceremonial life, as were still in the hands of the Gros Ventres at the turn of the century. He devotes considerable time to a detailed comparative treatment of decorative art, and in a separate paper deals with Gros Ventre Myths and Tales. Dr. Kroeber's major field work in 1900–03 was devoted to the Arapaho and in his monograph on this people he refers occasionally to his Gros Ventre data, especially, for instance, in the section on kinship terminology.

While the present ethnographical account deals primarily with Gros Ventre culture of the nineteenth century, as does Dr. Kroeber's Ethnology, the emphases are somewhat different. In Part I, for instance, we have found it possible to extend what Dr. Kroeber dealt with in several pages on social customs into a number of chapters dealing with aspects of the life cycle and kinship behavior. We have attempted to inject a chronological aspect through our detailed treatment of Gros Ventre history, but our sections on political organization and on war lack the lengthy firsthand statements by individuals which makes Dr. Kroeber's account so valuable. In Part II, we have been able to add vastly more detail on religious life than that presented by Dr. Kroeber. In our material, the Flat and Feathered Pipe rites are emphasized as well as personal supernatural powers. Furthermore we have presented the versions as told by our informants of the tales and myths pertinent to a given area of religious life. Some of these show variations on those published by Dr. Kroeber, and some are new.

Dr. Cooper worked with the Gros Ventres in the summers of

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1938, 1939, and 1940. The group of older men, who wanted a record of their old way of life taken down, emphasized the religious aspects of their culture. The Boy gave the largest portion of information on this subject. He is now about eighty years old and had been interested ever since he was a young boy in the native culture of his people. His father, Lame Bull, was a deeply religious man and had been a Keeper of the Flat Pipe. From him and from other old men The Boy acquired an enormous body of knowledge which his excellent memory retains. Thick, who died in 1951, and (John) Charles Buckman, who died in 1949, were contemporaries of The Boy and made substantial contributions to the record. Among still older men than these three were Stiffarm, Iron Man I, Joe Assiniboine, Turn Toes, Jim and Philip Shortman, all of whom gave additional information. Charles Buckman spoke English well and sometimes acted as interpreter for the others. Tom Main, a younger man, was, however, the chief interpreter for the men. Moreover, both he and Al Chandler were able to independently contribute valuable information. Biographical details on the chief informants are appended to the present volume.

With all of these men, Dr. Cooper was on excellent terms. They have told me that they realized from their first meeting with him that Dr. Cooper, being a man of deep religious conviction himself, would understand what they could tell him of Gros Ventre beliefs as they had been taught to them or to their fathers before Catholicism had any hold upon the Gros Ventres. The friendship which developed between Dr. Cooper on the one hand and Thick, Charles Buckman, Tom Main, and above all, The Boy, on the other, was a lasting one founded on the deepest mutual respect.

Dr. Cooper usually had the men come to his quarters at the priest's residence of the Mission for regularly scheduled sessions, especially in 1940 when he was able to take phonograph records of over a hundred Gros Ventre songs. The Boy, who accepted me as a substitute for Dr. Cooper in the years when the latter was unable, on account of ill health, to get out to Montana, remarked on a difference in our methods. Dr. Cooper tended to guide the interviews more closely than I and, since we both had the habit of recording the questions we asked, our field notes confirm The Boy's observation. Inasmuch as those who were engaged in making the record were detained from attending to their other duties, Dr.

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124 Cooper felt that compensation was due them. It may be stated however that the money paid was looked upon as in the nature of a gift, and the generosity displayed in the form of counter-gifts, both to Dr. Cooper and to me, was truly touching.

115 I was invited to the Fort Belknap Reservation in 1940 to work
123 exclusively with the women and to deal mainly with matters other than religion. The two oldest women at Hays, Coming Daylight and Singer, accepted me as their "granddaughter" which was fortunate in view of the freedom allowed between grandparents and grandchildren in Gros Ventre society. Although these two old women did not speak English, I was happy in having as interpreters women who were well liked by them and who were themselves interested in "the old ways of doing things." Thus they proved valuable informants on their own account. Mary Ereaux and the late Cora Chandler were two who served admirably in both capacities in 1940; Mathilda Cuts The Rope and Mae Main aided me most ably in 1945 and 1948. Garter Snake, a valuable informant, was the only woman for whom a man, Charles Buckman, interpreted.

123 While on the Reservation, I enjoyed the hospitality of the
124 School Sisters of Saint Francis at their convent. I went out, however, before nine and returned at five or six, spending each day visiting the women in their homes. There we smoked and chatted and worked in an atmosphere of easy informality. Much of the material given by the women might be classified under the heading of "expressive interviews." The older women were interested in the fact that I could take down so quickly in shorthand what the interpreter said, but occasionally checked on my accuracy, and the interpreter's as well, by asking me to read back for translation to them something they had said hours or days before!

In 1945 and 1948 when I worked with the men, who had previously cooperated with Dr. Cooper, the situation was naturally somewhat more formal than that which obtained with the women. We met in the Community Hall at Hays. As our business-like sessions proceeded, various Gros Ventre men dropped in and sat on the sidelines. Many of these, including some who were not regular informants or interpreters, such as Tom Bad Road, Steve Bradly, Rufus Warrior and others, helped by freely joining in

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the discussion when some problem arose or additional information was needed.

The material as presented in Part I, Social Life, is somewhat uneven due in some measure at least to the coincidence of age and sex differences in our chief informants. The two women,—Coming Daylight and Singer,—who gave the bulk of the material on the life cycle, on kinship behavior and on economic activities, came of a generation earlier than that of The Boy, Thick and Charles Buckman who supplied most of the information on political structure and war. The old women were able to draw on their personal experiences of Gros Ventre life as it was lived before the buffalo disappeared. They themselves had been child-brides, had lived in polygynous households, had worked innumerable buffalo skins, and so on. The men, however, had not yet attained adult status when the most radical change was inaugurated in their culture and thus were denied participation in the former type of culture to the same degree as that enjoyed by the women. Men and women alike, nevertheless, were careful to separate what they knew at first hand from what they had been told. Further, they indicated from whom they had acquired information, and the men especially estimated as accurately as they could to what decade a given event which they were describing might be attributed.

Although a considerable amount of linguistic data was gathered and drawn upon, all but a few of the native words have been eliminated from Part I. We hope to present the linguistic material in the future when it may be possible to publish as Part III a transcription of music and texts of the songs which we have recorded. The phonograph records of the 130 Gros Ventre songs are on deposit in the Department of Anthropology of The Catholic University of America, along with the musical notation of songs nos. 1–10, 12–15, 17–19, 23–24, which have very kindly been transcribed by Mrs. Marianne Arden. Songs nos. 24, 34, 37, 42, 43, 65, 89, 91, and 130, have been transcribed and analyzed by Mr. Jack Kilpatrick under the title, The Possible Relationship of Content to Form in Certain Gros Ventres Songs, a dissertation for the degree Master of Music, July 1946, manuscript copies of which are on deposit at the Library of The Catholic University of America.

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group was more or less permanently encamped. It was told by Mrs. Warrior, now a very old woman, as one of her childhood memories and was not elicited by questioning. 787 [124]

"Many, many years ago when I was a small girl, my father had gone on the warpath with several other men. When winter came they hadn't returned. So my uncle (mother's brother) went to an old woman, Good Singer, who was known to be a spiritualist, although she was famous for other medicine powers as well. She consented and the seance was held in the lodge. My sister and I and our aunts and relatives were all there. 787 539

"A curtain was hung across the back part of the lodge and Good Singer was bound with ropes tightly knotted, then wrapped in a blanket so that only her head stuck out. She was behind the curtain and began to sing a certain song. She told us all to sing that song four times. I joined in the singing. When we finished we heard a humming sound and scraping and all kinds of noise through the opening at the top of the lodge. The top of the lodge began to shake and all at once we heard something slide from the top down behind the curtain where the old woman was, and land with a thump. That was her spirit, that is, the spirit of her son who had died long, long before.

"As soon as they heard the thump my uncle said: 'Here is the offering,' as he handed behind the curtain the pot containing a pup they had killed and cooked. We could hear the dishes rattling as the spirit ate. Soon all of the bones were picked clean and the spirit tossed them over the curtain so that they landed in our midst. The spirit then complained that they had tied his mother so tightly, and as he untied her we could hear the sound of the ropes as he worked at them. Then the ropes too came sailing over the top of the curtain. They were all knotted up in one bunch, and, try as they would, they couldn't unravel it.

"The spirit then complained again: 'Why did you tie my mother up so tightly?' and then asked: 'What did you call me for?' My uncle said: 'Well, I called you because these men went out on a war party and some, including Holy Weasel, didn't return. I want to know where they are and what became of them.' Then my uncle lighted a pipe and put it under the cur-